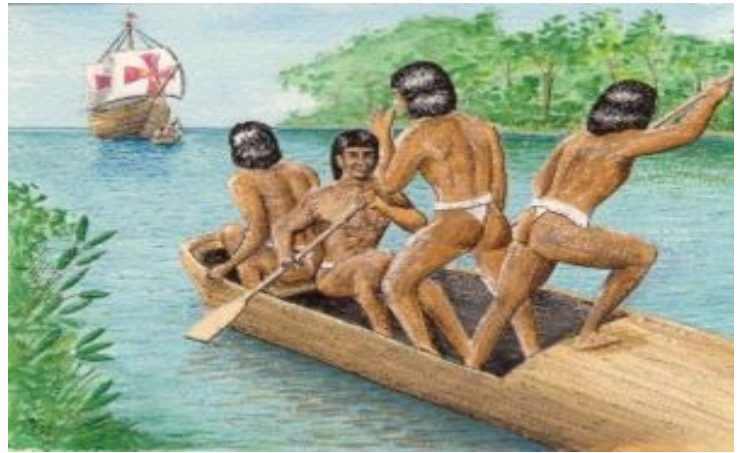
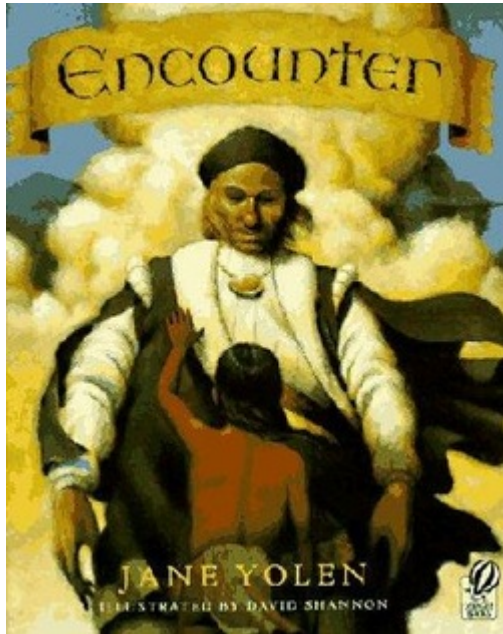


## Images and Descriptions: Columbus and the Taino



[sanespiritismo.blogspot.com](http://sanespiritismo.blogspot.com)

Being at sea, about midway between Santa Maria and the large island, which I name Fernandina, we met a man in a canoe going from Santa Maria to Fernandina; he had with him a piece of the bread which the natives make, as big as one's fist, a calabash of water, a quantity of reddish earth, pulverized and afterwards kneaded up, and some dried leaves which are in high value among them, for a quantity of it was brought to me at San Salvador; he had besides a little basket made after their fashion, containing some glass beads, and two blancas by all which I knew he had come from San Salvador, and had passed from thence to Santa Maria. He came to the ship and I caused him to be taken on board, as he requested it; we took his canoe also on board and took care of his



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things. I ordered him to be presented with bread and honey, and drink, and shall carry him to Fernandina and give him his property, that he may carry a good report of us, so that if it please our Lord when your Highnesses shall send again to these regions, those who arrive here may receive honor, and procure what the natives may be found to possess.



“Extracts from the journal of Columbus.” *American History* <http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/documents/before-1600/extracts-from-the-journal-of-columbus.php>

morgangold.com

“Fray Ramón Pané was commissioned by Columbus to record descriptions of the recently encountered Taino culture. Accompanying the second voyage, Pané lived for four years with the Taino on Hispaniola, learning the language, legends, and customs of the people. In about 1498 he compiled and presented to Columbus his *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios* ("Report about the antiquities of the Indians"). This account was known to have contained accurate and unbiased descriptions, and was used by Peter Martyr, las Casas, and Ferdinand Columbus.

Pané's report provided information on Taino social structure which included nobles (nitaíno) living in large rectangular houses (bohío) alongside the plazas, and commoners (naboría) in round houses (caney). While gathering much data on Taino religion, Pané reported on the widespread worship of zemi deities, the foremost of which was named Yúcahu Bagua Maórocoti



(Giver of cassava and master of the sea), whom José Juan Arrom (1988) has connected with typical three-pointed statues (fig.1) which began in Saladoid times. Pané also documented Taino songs and origin myths, including a belief that their ancestors had originated in a sacred cave on a mountain of Hispaniola”.

[**Fig.1:** Three-pointed zemi figurine from Puerto Rico (photo: *Athena Review*).]

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